

# California M E D I C I N E

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## Chemotherapy in Viral and Rickettsial Disease

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### SUMMARY

*Aureomycin and chloromycetin have now been used in a number of viral and rickettsial diseases and have gone far toward fulfilling their original promise. In local trials aureomycin has been shown to be a very effective drug in primary atypical pneumonia, and a valuable drug in Q fever. A small number of cases of psittacosis appear to have responded favorably to aureomycin. The search for chemotherapeutic compounds which may be effective in other viral diseases has been sharply stimulated by these developments.*

AT the time of the meeting of the California Medical Association in April of 1948 there were rumors that the whole outlook in the treatment of rickettsial and, perhaps, some viral diseases was about to be transformed. These arose from reports on experimental trials with two new antibiotic drugs, chloromycetin and aureomycin. During the ensuing year these drugs were tried by numerous groups of workers in a variety of diseases, and it is now safe to state that both have gone a long way toward fulfilling their promise.

Prior to 1948 the only drugs of proved effectiveness against viral diseases of man were the sulfona-

mides and penicillin.\* These had a relatively limited field of usefulness in certain diseases caused by the largest viruses. Sulfonamide drugs had been found useful in trachoma and inclusion conjunctivitis, against two strains of psittacosis virus, and in lymphogranuloma venereum. Penicillin, in large doses, had been shown to be effective in psittacosis.

In the rickettsial field paraminobenzoic acid had been shown to modify the course of several diseases, but its effectiveness was relatively low. Streptomycin had shown some promise in experimental animals, but had not produced any startling results in human infections. Extensive search had failed to disclose other compounds which were both effective and safe for use. The viruses of medium and small size remained unaffected by chemotherapeutic agents.

It is not within the scope of this paper to cover all the reported trials of aureomycin and chloromycetin in viral and rickettsial diseases. It is sufficient to state that there is now evidence that the former is effective in Q fever, typhus, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, rickettsialpox, lymphogranuloma venereum, psittacosis, and primary atypical pneumonia, and that the latter is effective in the rickettsial diseases listed above and in scrub typhus as well. Emphasis in this presentation will be placed on data taken from local investigations which illustrate the effectiveness of aureomycin and on a discussion of the significance of recent developments. The data on aureomycin in primary atypical pneumonia, Q fever, and psittacosis are taken from the combined

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Presented before the Section on Public Health at the 78th Annual Session of the California Medical Association, May 8-11, 1949, Los Angeles.

From the Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory of California State Department of Public Health, Berkeley.

\*For references in this field prior to 1948 the reader is referred to "Viral and Rickettsial Diseases of Man," edited by T. M. Rivers, J. B. Lippincott Co., Phila., 1948. The more recent literature has been reviewed by Brainerd, H. D., Lennette, E. H., Meiklejohn, G., Bruyn, H. B., and Clark, W. C. The Clinical Evaluation of Aureomycin, Proceedings of the Second National Symposium on Recent Advances in Antibiotic Research. J. Clin. Invest., 28:992-1005, Part I (Sept.), 1949.

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## EDITORIALS

### Whose Monopoly?

Many Americans and not a few newspapers were considerably disturbed last month when the American Medical Association announced that its own organization and 15 state or county medical societies were currently under investigation by the Department of Justice for "alleged violations of the federal anti-trust laws." The A.M.A. stated in its news release that these investigations had been started within a few days of each other and that they were considered to be component parts of a campaign of harassment against medical organizations which had opposed top level government plans to start a system of compulsory health insurance in this country.

We mention newspapers above because quite a few of these representatives of public opinion have come out editorially in opposition to this use of governmental authority in investigating the private records and files of non-profit organizations which have consistently and traditionally operated for the public benefit. The editorial comment has been concentrated against this use of governmental power and has employed such terms as "police state methods," "gestapo," and "power politics."

Since the original A.M.A. statement on this subject, the California Medical Association and one of its component county medical societies have fallen under the same form of inquisition. On top of that, another state medical association and four other county medical societies have been subjected to similar investigation. The list of medical organizations included in the government probe seems to be growing each week and it is noteworthy that the list includes principally those societies which have been outspoken in opposition to the establishment

of a system of government-controlled compulsory health insurance.

The original A.M.A. statement noted, and the additional investigations confirm, that this type of witch-hunting is not just a routine pursuit of governmental obligations. There seems to be something more behind all this and we are forced to wonder if some federal official or some former federal official might not be involved. Several names come to mind and we could easily imagine that some individuals who have enjoyed the fruits of governmental bounty as trusted officials might have added their names to the infamous list of "five percenters" who have achieved newspaper headlines in recent weeks.

We do not seek to list any individual's name in a group that has been thoroughly smoked out by public disclosure, but some person might well be selling his services on the basis of his connections in federal government circles. The name is not important, only the fact.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the very same government which is shouting "monopoly" at 23 medical organizations is seeking to establish a system of compulsory health insurance under which every American would pay taxes and would receive service under terms to be dictated by a governmental agency. Surely, such a system would be a monopoly in the strictest sense of the word.

Sometimes we wonder if the use of the word "monopoly" is actually meant to imply only business or professional organizations or if it should not also include federal governmental agencies which have the power of law or regulation to impose their own wishes, perhaps political, on the people of this country.

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## **NOTICES AND REPORTS**

### **Council Meeting Minutes**

*Tentative Draft: Minutes of the 365th Meeting of the Council of the California Medical Association at the Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, Saturday, September 24, 1949.*

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman MacLean, who yielded the chair to Chairman Shipman upon the latter's arrival, in Conference Room Number 5 of the Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, September 24, 1949.

#### **Roll Call:**

Present were President Kneeshaw, President-Elect Cass, Speaker Alesen, Councilors Ball, Crane, Henderson, Anderson, Ray, Montgomery, Lum, Pollock, Green, Shipman, West, MacLean, Frees and Thompson, and Secretary Garland. Absent: Vice-Speaker Charnock, Councilor Bailey and Editor Wilbur.

A quorum present and acting.

Present by invitation were John Hunton, executive secretary; Howard Hassard, legal counsel; William P. Wheeler, assistant executive secretary; Ben H. Read, executive secretary of the Public Health League of California; Ed Clancy, field secretary, and county society executive secretaries Waterson of Alameda, Cochems of Los Angeles, Venables of Kern, Tobitt of Orange and Young of San Diego.

Present by invitation for periods during the meeting were Doctors Henry Gardner and William Gardener and Mr. William M. Bowman of California Physicians' Service; Dr. E. L. Bruck, former Councilor; Dr. Eugene F. Hoffman, A.M.A. Delegate; Dr. Wilton L. Halverson, state director of public health; Doctors Stanton Farnsworth and Glenn A. Westphal of the Association of Local Health Officers; Dr. Notkin and Mr. Hart of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation of the State Department of Education; Dr. Gerald G. Gill of the Western Orthopedic Association; and Dr. Lester I. Newman and Messrs. Gordon Snow, John Knox and B. F. Meekins, representing compensation insurance underwriters.

#### **1. Minutes for Approval:**

(a) Minutes of the 364th meeting of the Council, held July 9, 1949, were approved as drafted and circulated.

(b) Minutes of the 215th meeting of the Executive Committee, held August 18, 1949, were approved as amended; the amendment was in the report of a special committee to consider eligibility requirements for election to Affiliate Membership, the amendment holding that members who had been engaged in private practice should not be eligible for election to Affiliate Membership but should be eligible for a reduction of dues on proof of illness or full-time postgraduate study.

#### **2. Membership:**

(a) A report of membership as of September 22, 1949, was received and ordered filed.

(b) On motion duly made and seconded, 46 members whose 1949 dues had been received since the last Council meeting were voted reinstatement as active members.

(c) On motion duly made and seconded, one member whose 1948 and 1949 dues had been received since the last Council meeting was voted reinstatement as an active member.

(d) On motion duly made and seconded in each instance, three members were elected to Retired Membership. These were:

David Hadden, Alameda County.

William R. McGrew, Alameda County.

Ernest G. Motley, Orange County.

(e) On motion duly made and seconded in each instance, four applicants were elected to Associate Membership. These were:

Myron W. Husband, Humboldt County.

A. J. Fidler, San Diego County.

Thomas W. Hagerty, Ventura County.

Dorothy B. Sproul, Ventura County.

(f) On motion duly made and seconded, seven applicants were elected to Affiliate Membership. These were:

Kern County: Robert D. Payne, S. Robert Polito, Keith W. Spaulding, Eugene P. Wagner.

San Francisco County: Rey Cardon, Theodore W. Loring, Edward E. Garvey.

It was pointed out that under the provisions adopted by the Council for eligibility for Affiliate